THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) The Bay of Bengal and Mahanadi area comprises five sedimentary basins having a basinal area of 41,000 sq. kms. The total prognosticated reserves in these basins are approximately 1135 MMT (O+OEG). Government of India has awarded a total of 41 Exploration Blocks, so far, for oil/gas exploration activities. 27 oil and gas discoveries have been made by private/Joint Venture (JV) companies. 657.74 MMT of in place oil and gas reserves have been established. Oil production from the east coast is about 7,470 tonnes/day whereas gas production is 2.3 MMSCMD.

Apart from these 41 blocks, Government of India has offered 23 blocks under the ongoing VI bidding round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), for which bid-closing date is 15.9.2006.

New Marketing Strategy for LPG Cylinders

1592. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning for a new marketing strategy for distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that domestic LPG cylinders are being diverted for commercial purposes and to check such diversion by oil companies has proved futile; and

(d) if so,the extent to which the new marketing strategy for distribution of LPG cylinders would check such diversion of LPG cylinders for commercial purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) The cases of diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes have come to the notice of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). With a view to curb diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes, Government has advised OMCs to provide different colour scheme for domestic and commercial cylinders for easy identification.

The following measures have been taken to prevent the diversion/ black marketing of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes.

(i) Under the LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000 promulgated under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 the diversion/black marketing of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes by the distributors OMCs is prohibited. The State Governments are empowered to take action against erring distributor under the provisions of this Order. The State Governments have been alerted from time to time to take steps against the diversion of domestic cylinders for unauthorized usage.

(ii) The officials of OMCs carry out random checks at distributors godown, delivery point, as well as en-route to ensure that no diversion/black marketing takes place. As per the MDG, in case of establishment of any diversion/black marketing of domestic LPG cylinder for commercial purposes, the following action is taken against the distributor:—

(1) Fine of Rs. 20,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 1st offence.

(2) Fine of Rs. 50,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 2nd offence, and

(3) Termination of the distributorship for 3rd offence.

The proposed different colour scheme for domestic and commercial cylinders is likely to help in controlling the diversion of domestic LPG for unauthorized use.

New Agencies in Madhya Pradesh

†1593. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the places where new agencies for petrol pumps, kerosene and LPG in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have been allotted during the last three years, district-wise;

(b) the date of allocation of these agencies alongwith the names of beneficiaries;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.